27. (New) The method of claim 24, further comprising:

adding an additional stabilizer after loading the colloidal particles.

28. (New) The method of claim 27, wherein the additional stabilizer is an inert protein, polyethylene glycol, or a mixture thereof.

29. (New) The method of claim 24, wherein the colloidal particles are selected from the group consisting of gold, silver, copper, platinum, palladium and mixtures thereof.

30. (New) The method of claim 24, wherein the biomolecules are selected from the group consisting of antibodies, antibody fragments, lectins, enzymes, streptavidin, avidin, protein A, antigens, peptides, and haptens.

Sub D2 C1

31. (New) A process for producing colloidal particles having biomolecule absorbing surfaces, the process comprising:

adding a detergent to a solution containing biomolecules, and thereafter

contacting colloidal particles with the solution.

32. (New) The method of claim 31, wherein the colloidal particles are selected from the group consisting of gold, silver, copper, platinum, palladium and mixtures thereof.

33. (New) The method of claim 31, wherein the biomolecules are selected from the group consisting of antibodies, antibody fragments, lectins, enzymes, streptavidin, avidin, protein A, antigens, peptides, and haptens.

Sub D3

34. (New) A method for stabilizing conjugates composed of colloidal particles and biomolecules, the method consisting essentially of:

adding detergent to a solution containing biomolecules,

loading colloidal particles with the solution, and thereafter

~~adding an additional stabilizer.~~

35. (New) The method of claim 34, wherein the amount of detergent does not exceed a critical micelle concentration.

36. (New) The method of claim 35, wherein the concentration of the detergent is 0.001 to 1 mM.

37. (New) The method of claim 34, wherein the additional stabilizer is an inert protein, polyethylene glycol, or a mixture thereof.

38. (New) The method of claim 34, wherein the colloidal particles are selected from the group consisting of gold, silver, copper, platinum, palladium and mixtures thereof.

39. (New) The method of claim 34, wherein the biomolecules are selected from the group consisting of antibodies, antibody fragments, lectins, enzymes, streptavidin, avidin, protein A, antigens, peptides, and haptens.--

Remarks

New claims 24-39 are presently pending. Applicant cancels claims 17-21 and 23 herein, without prejudice or disclaimer.

New claims 24-28, 34-37 recite the subject matter of now cancelled claims 17-21, with minor changes to overcome the rejection of claims 17-21 under § 112, second paragraph. Claims 24 and 34, reciting the limitations of now cancelled claim 17, now recite a "stepwise method" and provide proper antecedent basis for all claim elements. Claim 34 differs from claim 23 in that it recites the transitional phrase "consisting essentially of". Claims 25 and 35 recite a critical micelle concentration. In the present specification on page eight, in the second paragraph, critical micelle concentration is defined as the "concentration at which higher aggregates, so-called micelles, are formed from the surfactant molecules." Claims 26 and 35 , reciting the limitations of now cancelled claim